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CRC synod adopts sweeping structural changes for ministry in Canada

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The Christian Reformed Church as an institution is going to look quite different a few years from now, especially in Canada.

On the first full day of deliberations at the denomination's general synod meetings, held at Calvin College from June 14-21, delegates voted for sweeping structural changes. These changes will reorganize how the CRC does its ministry in Canada, and eventually, probably in the U.S. as well.

The decision came after a period of years when various attempts were made by the denomination to bring Canadian CRC ministries "closer to the people" and to increase the accountability of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC). (The council

is made up of a voluntary association of the CRC classes in Canada, but does not in itself have authority to make binding decisions.)

Final option

One such attempt was a 1993 proposal to consider adopting regional synods. In 1995 the CCRCC was given direct access to synod rather than having to bring issues to synod via its member classes.

The current decision to create extensive changes in the structure of CRC ministries in Canada came in response to a report compiled by a synodical study committee also commissioned in 1995.

The study committee consisted of two Americans — Shirley Roels and William Terpstra — and nine Canadians: Gerrit Bomhof (secretary), Neil de

Koning, Ray Elgersma, Gordon Pols (chair), Ed Vander Veer, Ben Vandezande (facilitator), and Jack Westerhof. CRC executive director of ministries Peter Borgdorff acted as an advisor.

The committee was charged with examining the structure of the CRC's ministry in Canada and proposing a structure for such ministry which would acknowledge the "truly binational" character of the denomination.

The committee did so, and developed a structural model which it — and synod — felt "is designed 'to enhance, inspire, and equip the church to carry on its mission (locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally) most effectively'" (from the *Agenda for Synod 1997*, p. 378).

Committee facilitator Ben Vandezande of St. Catharines, Ont., says the new structure will "honor the binational character

of the church and provide a look at a different way to organize ourselves."

Vandezande, who is director of Diaconal Ministries of Eastern Canada (DMEC), says in summary: "The intent to better serve the local churches through the agencies was the single most important thing."

(See accompanying story, p. 5, on the nature of the structural changes.)



Not all discussion at synod took place indoors. Revs. Arie Van Eek (CCRCC) and Homer Samplonius (Alberta North) meet at coffee time. Break time, however, was kept to a minimum this year — synod had only one week instead of two to complete its work (and actually finished early).

New Ontario curriculum sets precise objectives

Alan Doerksen

ANCASTER, SARNIA and GEORGETOWN, Ont. — John Snobelen, Ontario's Education Minister, has introduced a new curriculum for math and language for Grades 1 to 8 which public schools are asked to implement this fall.

Christian school principals are taking note of the proposed guidelines and comparing them to their own schools' standards.

Snobelen explains that the new curriculum has been developed because "our goal is to have the highest achievement in Canada."

The curriculum spells out exactly what children should learn in each grade. "From now on, teachers and parents will have a clearer understanding of what children should learn and what they should be able to



John Snobelen

demonstrate in class and on tests," says Snobelen.

He adds that he is responding "to parents' concerns that Ontario students are not keeping

pace with their counterparts in other countries and other provinces."

Vague guidelines

The New Ontario Curriculum replaces the Common Curriculum that was brought in by the previous NDP government two years ago. Snobelen comments that parents and teachers found the last curriculum too vague and that it resulted in an uneven patchwork of local curricula developed at the board level across Ontario.

The new curriculum brings changes to math and English language instruction, and also introduces province-wide testing and standard report cards, which will replace report cards issued by school boards.

Province-wide testing began already this spring. All Grade 3

public school students were tested in reading, writing and math; and some Grade 6 students also took a province-wide math test. The tests were developed by an independent agency that measures student performance and will release a report this fall identifying areas in the school system that need improvement.

In the area of language, students will be expected to write in simple but complete sentences using proper punctuation by the end of Grade 1. By the

end of Grade 6, students should be able to use subordinate clauses correctly and use verb tenses consistently.

In math, Grade 4 students should be able to add and subtract large numbers mentally and solve math problems in meaningful contexts such as architecture. By Grade 7, students should be able to understand exponents.

All of Ontario's public schools are expected to teach the new math and language

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News

WHAM: Cross-fertilizing Christian higher education

Robert VanderVennen

WILLOWDALE, Ont. — For the second time in two years leaders in Canadian Christian higher education gathered with WHAM force. At this year's WHAM conference ("With Heart and Mind") at Ontario Theological Seminary near Toronto, 60 professors and administrators from all over the country learned from each other and enjoyed each other's company for three days in late May. An earlier national WHAM was held in 1995 in Regina, Saskatchewan.

The organizers were from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, respectively Harro Van Brummelen, Ken Badley, Gordon T. Smith and John Franklin. WHAM's two main themes were "imaginativity" and postmodernism, flanked by workshops, an arts program and worship.

Calvin Seerveld, retired from the Institute for Christian Studies, gave the keynote lecture on "Thankful 'Imaginativity' Inside Schooling." God has "imaginativity," said Seerveld — the Bible says that he

delights in such things as rainstorms, lions stalking prey and wild animals giving birth. We know *wonder* to be the stuff of human imagination.

"Imaginativity" is one of the 12 ways we exist as human beings, said Seerveld as he explained his tin-can model of the human creature. The heart of "imaginativity" is making believe, doing as if ... , musing, cross-associating, playing games, improvising. Schools should ring with "imaginativity," he said. Imaginative knowledge is aesthetic knowledge; "it gets into the crevices of things." Thinking is not the only way we know things — feeling a piece of cloth gives us some knowledge, for example.

Trying to define postmodernism

Craig Gay of Regent College, Vancouver, bravely undertook to tell Canadian educators about postmodernism. Postmodernism is a vague thing, mostly identifying for us that modernism is past, he said. Gay said that postmodernism suggests that words, ideas, beliefs and



Calvin Seerveld (right) confers with Roger Uitti about "imaginativity."

knowledge in general are only tools that people use to define themselves. *Meaning* is not connected with *truth*.

Yet in his formal response to Gay's paper, Doug Harink of The King's University College in Edmonton said that in a certain way Gay wasn't really identifying postmodernism at all, but that he was talking about modernism.

Technology is a whipping boy of postmodernism, it seems, and

technology was one of the sub-themes running through the conference. Yet there seemed to be no scientists or technologists present, aside from some conferees who do mighty things with computers.

Two days of discussion

Discussion of these two keynote themes took up most of two days. Many workshop topics also dealt with these subjects, but other topics were also

included. The workshop of Bob Birkenshaw (Trinity Western University), for example, identified the enormous contribution of Bible institutes and Bible colleges to churches in Canada, especially in rural areas. He also pointed out the problems that these institutions have today and how they are trying to cope with them.

In another illuminating workshop Wendy Smoliak reported on her doctoral research on the imaginative constructs children have of God, and how these develop over the years — which she found by spending a year in a Christian school and interviewing the children.

The conference included an evening arts performance at which Joanne Gerber read from some of her writing. Tania Lee Osmond of Toronto played piano music from the classic repertoire during pauses in the reading, and Celeste Snowber Schroeder of British Columbia presented interpretive dances. Visual art by Toronto artists was displayed. The conference ended with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Redeemer profs outline witness of Christian higher education



Redeemer professors Al Wolters (left), Michael Goheen and Gene Haas lead a workshop on perspective in Christian higher education.

Robert VanderVennen

WILLOWDALE, Ont. — Three professors of biblical studies at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont., presented their insights on mission, worldview and contextualization for Christian post-secondary education at a recent conference on Christian higher education in Canada.

Professors Michael Goheen, Al Wolters and Gene Haas

presented their insights into these basic issues in an exciting workshop at the WHAM (With Heart and Mind) conference at Ontario Theological Seminary, May 29-31.

Working with some concepts spelled out by retired British missionary Leslie Newbigin, Goheen said that our calling today is to bring the gospel to a world which has changed much

in recent decades. The gospel today needs to be defined as more than evangelism and personal salvation. Needed is the prophetic image of the Kingdom of God which Jesus announced in his ministry on earth.

We must witness in higher education to the renewal of all of creation, of which scholarship and higher education are part, said Goheen. Our witness must stand in judgment over the idols of our civilization, so that all may be brought under the rule of Christ. The university is strategic, he maintained, because it is at the heart of our culture.

Solid foundation

Wolters followed that up by calling for the solid foundation of a biblical worldview for education. He said that underneath the basic themes of creation, fall and redemption we need to understand the concepts of structure and direction.

Structure, said Wolters, refers to the creation by God of all things, and also God's creation of the meaning of each thing and its relation to other things and the whole of creation. *Direction*

identifies the fundamental movement of everything either in the direction of obedience to God and the fulfilment of his calling, or else in the service of a false god.

For instance, he said, is technology the salvation of the world, as Norbert Wiener has suggested, or is it the world's destroyer, as Jacques Ellul would have us believe? Neither, if you accept the view of Egbert Schuurman, Dutch engineer, professor and political statesman, who uses the concepts of structure and direction. These concepts give us the context for fruitful thinking about technology and other issues in the world.

Seeing in context

Also vital in Christian higher education is a keen sense of contextualization, said Gene Haas. He said that one can study the writings of liberal theologians, for instance, and find all kinds of reasons why this theology is defective. But what if one contextualizes this theology by seeing the movie of the life of Oscar Romero, murdered priest who came to accept poor people

and their theology of liberalization? Then you have a whole different perspective, with liberation theology looking better because you have contextualized the subject.

Contextualization needs to inform and shape all of education, insisted Haas. Every culture is in the grip of a worldview. To understand ourselves in relation to others means we need context to our beliefs. Only then can we avoid the quicksand of syncretism, of innocently bringing into our beliefs false ideas which seem good. Contextualization will help us to rightly critique postmodernism, and help us fight against modernism, humanism and secularism.

To illustrate his point, Haas said that contextualization helps us appreciate the great document we have in the *Westminster Confession* of faith. But because it was very relevant to its time a few hundred years ago, we also need new confessions of faith today in our different culture.

The workshop ended with a good discussion showing the audience's lively interest in these ideas.

News

Some schools reluctant to change curriculum

... continued from page 1

The new science and technology curriculum will be introduced in September, followed next February by the new curricula for history, geography, physical education and arts. This summer, the Ministry of Education will provide orientation sessions on the new curriculum for English- and French-language teachers.

But some public school boards are reluctant to change their curricula so soon. The school boards of Toronto and North York have both announced that they will not introduce the new curriculum until autumn 1998.

Closer to Christian school standards

Jim Vreugdenhil, elementary education co-ordinator for the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS), says the new curriculum will not influence the province's Christian schools. "We have our own clearly published standards," he explains. OACS has its own detailed curriculum requirements for math and language.

Vreugdenhil agrees with some aspects of the new curriculum. "Getting back to a good knowledge base is indeed a good move.... I think that children need to know core knowledge and facts." But he asserts that Christian schools "have always maintained our knowledge base."

Pro-choice in reporting

On the topic of standardized report cards, Vreugdenhil says, "I'm not totally convinced that standardized report cards are necessary." Instead, principals and schools should have freedom to express their own ideas.

Ontario's Christian schools did not participate in the Grade 3 and 6 testing which went on last spring, says Vreugdenhil. The schools considered the testing "problematic," partly because the tests would have cost \$50 per student.

Vreugdenhil believes education at Ontario's Christian



Mrs. Bonnie Desjardins teaches Grade One at John Knox Memorial Christian School in Fruiland, Ont.

schools is ahead of the public school system, but he notes, "I think the new public standards are much closer to Christian schools than before." Tests conducted in 1993 and 1994 showed that students at Christian schools in Ontario are generally 10 to 30 per cent ahead of students in public schools, says Vreugdenhil.

As Education Minister, Snobelen is "doing what he set out to do" but with "precious little consultation," he comments.

Use as guide

Treena Sybersma, principal of Georgetown District Christian School, says that although her school is not directly affected by the new curriculum, "I'm certainly going to have a careful look at it." Sybersma says she will treat it "not as a working document but as a guiding document." The Georgetown school follows the curriculum guidelines set by OACS, says Sybersma.

Like Vreugdenhil, she doesn't like the idea of standardized report cards. "We would find it extremely restricting," she says. For one thing, such report cards would not be "reflective of individual communities." In Christian schools such as hers, "the individual community will

curriculum will affect his school "to some degree."

Broomer believes the Ontario government is "going too fast" with curriculum changes. He doesn't think it is fair to expect public school teachers to use the new curriculum already this fall.

Broomer thinks it is a good idea to have province-wide tests in math and language. But he adds, "Testing is only good if results are used to create better programming."

Broomer believes his school's students are ahead of those in public schools. "As a Christian school, we tend to set high standards."

Not for all students

Peter Weening, principal of Sarnia Christian School, welcomes specific guidelines. But he thinks that not all students can reach the standards set for each year, for various reasons such as their learning abilities.

The new curriculum won't affect Weening's school directly, but he says the school will try to meet or exceed the standards of Ontario's public schools. "We certainly don't want standards lower than our public school counterparts."

In general, Canada's Christian schools are well ahead of public schools in their academic standards, says Weening. "The Canadian test of basic skills indicated our schools generally exceed the national average by one to two grade levels."

Like Broomer, Weening believes the new curriculum was introduced too quickly. "It seems to me unreasonable to expect implementation by September."

Weening believes standardized report cards are a good idea because parents want report cards that are clear and concise. But he adds that his school and others connected with OACS have never been able to agree on standardized report cards.

Province-wide testing of students is not necessary, says Weening. "I don't see the benefit of it."

Generally, Weening supports the changes the Ontario government is making to the public school system, while acknowledging that these changes have not affected Christian schools much. "I think there needs to be a tightening up in terms of wise use of our tax dollars. That part I applaud."

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Editorial

Are we obligated to the Lord of the universe?

My wife and I were having dinner with a couple from Holland. The conversation drifted to, of all things, "the meaning of life." Can you imagine us sitting in the Oban Inn in Niagara-on-the-Lake with a sumptuous candlelit dinner and a fine glass of Niagara wine in front of us and talking about the meaning of life?

I don't do this to everybody I have dinner with, but this was a special case. We had met on the Internet and discovered that we were third cousins. I had been praying for this Witvoet. I knew that he and his wife no longer attended church, though they had attended a Christian Reformed church earlier in their marriage.

My cousin told to the third generation said that life has meaning when you are happily married, your children are healthy and you do good. I said that for me life has no meaning apart from God. He found that strange. And so the talk went back and forth for a while.

His wife, who had followed the conversation

with great interest, asked me whether I felt obliged to God. For a moment the question stunned me. No one had ever asked me that question before. "Yes, I do," I finally answered. "But it's a joyful obligation that I feel. Doing God's will is good for me." Both she and her husband shook their heads. Feeling obligated to God was apparently a surrender of freedom they were not prepared to make.

The very nature of God

The conversation has stuck with me. Frankly, I was amazed at the question whether I felt obliged to God. I had always thought that the very concept of God included a sense of obligation. If God is God, he has a claim on us. The very notion of divinity includes worship and service — always has, always will. That's why I had to mentally adjust to the question.

In fact, I was almost ashamed of having to say that I feel obliged, as if I were just admitting to a very stupid and dishonorable practice ... until the truth of the matter dawned on me. *Of course* I feel obliged. That is at the heart of my relationship with God. But a few hours with a couple who acted and breathed autonomy had almost thrown me off balance.

The sad part of the whole business is that this cousin is the son of a man who lived and breathed dependence on God. His father was a staunch Reformed believer who gloried in the supremacy of God. I know, because I have read some of his writings. What happened to his son that he could even question one's sense of obligation?

That he and his wife did not feel obliged, I could understand. They did not presume to be believers. But that they thought it strange that someone who professes to be a Christian should feel obliged blew my mind.

Fewer references to God as Lord

But I should not be surprised. I hear that the United Church has put out a new hymnbook called *Voices United* that excludes many references to God as Lord, Father and King. I know that many in our society are against speaking of God as Father and King because of inclusive language concerns. In fact, in the *Hymn Book* of 1971 (the red book which was put together in expectation of a union between the United Church and the Anglican Church) 11 hymns begin with "Father," whereas none in the new hymnal do. But two start with mother images of God.

That's not to say that there are no hymns left in *Voices United* that speak of the Father God, but the trend away from that image is clear. The hymn "This Is My Father's World" has now become "This Is God's Wondrous World."

And "Praise My Soul the King of Heaven" has become "Praise My Soul the God of Heaven."

Trend away from transcending God

But why exclude references to God as Lord? Fred Kimball Graham, co-ordinator of liturgical resources in the United Church explains it as a way of setting "Lord" aside for Jesus and reserving "God" for Jehovah. So, "The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Has Ended" is now "The Day You Gave Us, God, Has Ended."

Perhaps it is again the voice of inclusiveness that has prompted this change from what appears to be a masculine term for God to a gender-neutral term.

But I think more is at stake here. I see it as an avoidance of an authority image. Many people in our society want to move away from a transcendent God to the immanent God we find in Jesus of Nazareth and in the loving acts of a neighbor. Indeed, many of the hymns in *Voices United* are about Jesus. And Hymn 695 says that "God is passionate life, strong and vibrant in us as we seek justice for all people (in the following verses, "justice" is replaced with "freedom," "equality," "dignity" and "peace." God here is equated with our search for the idols of modern society.

Grandiose words omitted

And so the question put to me by a visiting couple from Holland finds resonance in a trend I see in society and in the United Church of Canada. How ironic that one of the founders of the United Church, the Rev. Robert Murray, in 1880 wrote the words "From ocean unto ocean our land shall name you Lord, and filled with true devotion, obey your sovereign Word."

About 20 years ago, I met Robert Murray's daughter, who lived near our home in Woodbridge, Ont. She told me that her father had written the hymn. "Grandiose words, aren't they?" she had said to me. But the words had little or no meaning beyond the aesthetics for her. She had become thoroughly humanistic and no longer believed that "our prairies and our mountains ... to you shall tribute yield."

I notice that "From Ocean unto Ocean," which appeared in the previous two United Church hymnals, does not appear in the new hymnal. In the Foreword to *Voices United* we are told that the hymn committee resorted to the "culling of obsolescent hymns." Robert Murray's hymn must have been deemed obsolescent — passing out of use. Perhaps the language is too grandiose for this age. It says that our country has an obligation to name God Lord. That just won't do in the 1990s.

BW

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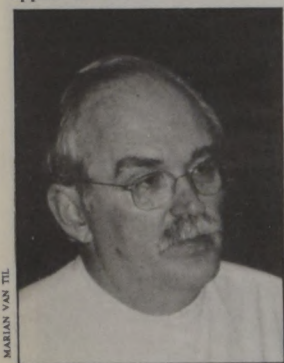
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New CRC structure for Canada replaces CCRCC

Geared to more effective outreach

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The proposed structural changes to CRC Canadian ministries cannot be described in a few sentences, though they are perhaps not as complex as they appear at first.



Ben Vandezande facilitated the study committee.

by the CCRCC and those of the CRC agencies in Canada: Home Missions, World Missions, CRWRC, chaplaincy, etc.

The board will be comprised of four pastors, four elders and four deacons (selected by the classes), and three to six people appointed for their particular expertise.

Board members will report regularly to the classes and also serve on one of the proposed Standing Ministry Committees. The CMB would replace the biennial meeting of the CCRCC.

Three ministry clusters

All of the current CRC agencies, the current ministries of the CCRCC and the diaconal organizations will be grouped in three ministry "clusters" — International Ministries, Domestic Ministries, Church Development — and each will be co-ordinated by a Standing Ministry Committee.

"The purpose here is to group ministries together in order to enhance the teamwork and ensure a co-ordinated delivery of services to the churches [congregations] or outreach to our neighbor," says the Overview. "The Standing Ministry Committees will assume greater responsibilities as they mature and gain credibility," but for now, current denominational boards and their binational membership will be maintained.

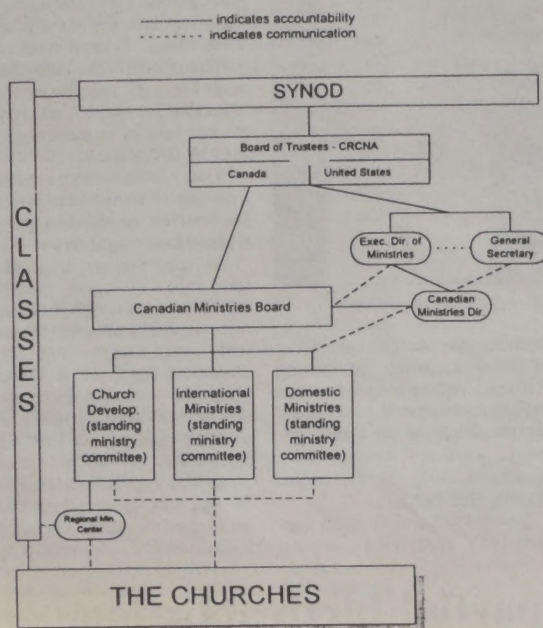
Every three years a national conference will be convened, bringing together delegates from across Canada. The purpose of the triennial conference is to allow additional grassroots input into all the Canadian ministries, as well as to discuss significant current issues.

The study committee sees this as a way "to ensure significant and meaningful input from the local church."

Spokesperson

The Ministries Director will work closely with the CMB to co-ordinate Canadian ministries. He or she will also serve as a spokesperson for the Christian Reformed Church in Canada. The director will also work closely with the denominational executive director of ministries (currently Peter Borgdorff) and

Diagram 1
An Overview of the Proposed Structure for Canadian Ministries



the general secretary (currently Dr. David Engelhard). This position will replace that of the executive secretary of the CCRCC

(Rev. Arie Van Eek, due to retire this year).

Three or four Regional Ministries Centres will be established

as a "vital link between the denominational agencies and the churches and classes." Each "centre" will be more like a "desk" put together by a person — a Regional Ministry Developer — for "one-stop shopping access to the resources of the denomination that can help the churches in their local ministry," says Ben Vandezande, facilitator of the study committee which developed the new structure.

Next two years

In the next two years, the following will be implemented:

- The Canadian Ministries Board (CMB) will be put in place, with all CRC ministries and agencies accountable to it.
- The Canadian Ministries Director will be selected and begin his or her work.
- The denominational ministries in Canada (Home Missions, World Missions, CRWRC, etc.) will begin to work in three groups (the Standing Ministry Committees) to co-ordinate their ministry.
- The first Regional Ministry Centre will be put in place — probably in Western Canada.

Executive strong on 'Canadian content'

Marian Van Til

GRAND

RAPIDS, Mich.

— Three of the four members of this year's synod executive had Canadian connections. The president, Rev. Michael De Vries, is a Canadian who is currently pastor of the 150-year-old Pillar CRC in Holland, Mich. De Vries served two other American CRC congregations (Arcadia, Calif.

and Harderwyk, Holland, Mich.) and three CRCs in Canada (Surrey, B.C., Rehoboth, Toronto and Maranatha, York, Ont.). De Vries has been a synod delegate five times and served on two synodical study committees.

Synod vice-president Rev. Wayne Brouwer, whose wife, Brenda, is a Canadian, is currently co-pastor of a church



L.-r.: Vice-President Wayne Brouwer, second clerk Norman Meyer, first clerk George Vandervelde, President Michael De Vries: enjoying synod.

formerly served by Michael De Vries, Harderwyk, Holland, Mich. But before that he served in London, Ont., at First CRC. Brouwer became a columnist for CC when he was pastor at First, London, and continues in that role. He began his ministry as a missionary in Nigeria.

First clerk Dr. George Vandervelde represented Classis

Toronto as an elder delegate and is senior member in theology at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

The second clerk was Rev. Norman Meyer, pastor of Brookside CRC in Grand Rapids. He was previously a Home Missions interim ministry specialist.

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CRC Synod 1997

Hebrew specialist given faculty post at Calvin Sem

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Michael Williams was hired two years ago by Calvin Theological Seminary as an instructor in Hebrew to replace Dr. David Engelhard when Engelhard took on the job of denominational general secretary. In those two years, said seminary president Dr. James De Jong, Williams "has become an integral and congenial part of the faculty."

Now delegates were asked to make him a more permanent part of the faculty — an assistant professor with an initial three-year term.

Williams has an interesting and diverse background and did not grow up a Christian. He was led to Christ while serving in the U.S. military on a submarine.

Williams was questioned briefly on his Old Testament knowledge by delegate Rev. John Hellinga of Aylmer, Ont. Then other delegates were able to question Williams.

Acknowledging that seminary



Michael Williams

students are increasingly leery of the necessity of taking Hebrew, Williams insisted that such study is crucial, as is studying the whole of the Old Testament.

Being the best

He said, "I would want [students] to understand that the

purpose of taking Hebrew at the seminary is to give them a foundation on which to build. I'd like them to appreciate the purpose of the Old Testament — that it points toward Christ; I want them to understand its prophetic role. The Old Testament has very specific, real applications in the church today; it's not just an introduction to the New Testament....

"Can we be pastors without knowing Hebrew? Sure we can. But can we be the best pastors without knowing Hebrew? No."

Williams answered questions on a range of topics, including the biblical basis of our environmental responsibility; the current applicability of Old Testament laws; about his personal devotional habits; about the biblical creation story and whether Adam and Eve were real people.

To that last he affirmed that the Fall was "an actual historical event that introduced sin into the human race via the real people

Adam and Eve.... If there was no actual Fall, there can be no real redemption."

Williams was approved as an

assistant professor by a unanimous and enthusiastic voice vote.

Two denominations break fellowship with CRC

Synod responds

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) have broken ecclesiastical fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The broken ties occurred primarily over the more conservative OPC's and PCA's objections to the Christian Reformed Church's 1995 decision to allow women to be ordained.

The OPC's stated clerk, on behalf of its general assembly, sent a five-and-a-half page letter to the CRC dated June 10 informing the latter that the OPC would "terminate our existing Ecclesiastical Fellowship" (sic).

The letter called the decision of the OPC's 64th General Assembly "one of the most difficult decisions that it has ever made in its entire history," and noted that the relationship had begun 61 years earlier on June 11, 1936.

The letter insisted that in allowing women to be ordained the CRC had "set aside ... the clear command of 1 Tim. 2:12." Much of the letter set out hermeneutical principles which the OPC felt the CRC has ignored.

OPC fraternal delegate Rev. John T. Gilgrath told CRC delegates that he and his church were sorrowing. He hoped the separation would not be permanent and assured synod that "our love and prayers for you will continue."

Accusations of shift

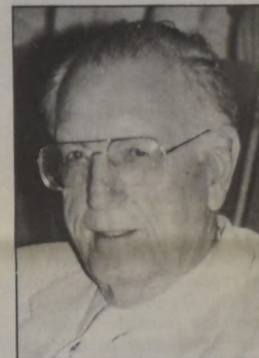
Though the PCA expressed sorrow at their breaking of ties, its statement was more pointed. In addition, after inviting a CRC fraternal delegate to their general assembly, they refused him a chance to speak because the decision to break ties had already been made.

A June 16 letter from the stated clerk of the PCA general assembly accused the CRC of "a subtle but profound shift ... away from its historic commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture." It added: "We have become convinced that you are now vulnerable to other departures from sound biblical doctrine and practice." Still, the PCA requested that "we might begin to explore together how the CRC and PCA may still maintain some constructive relationship."

Acknowledgement of regret

The CRC synod responded with short statements to each church. A letter to the OPC acknowledged with regret the break in ties of "brotherly love that ... bound us closely for many years." The letter expressed a hope that "ways may be found to discuss hermeneutical issues and search for ways in which we can co-operate, especially in local missions and witness."

There was some discussion of the proposed letter to the PCA because of its reference to the "infallible Word of God" rather than the PCA's use of the word "inerrancy."



Rev. John T. Gilgrath

Synod decries partial-birth abortion, declines study of abortion, euthanasia

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Synod passed a statement "reaffirm[ing] the unique value of all human life and condemn[ing] partial birth abortion." But when synod was asked by Classis Wisconsin to form a new study committee which would provide biblical grounds for the denominational position [against] abortion, it declined to do so.

A letter will be sent on behalf of the church by the general secretary to U.S. President Clinton "lamenting the presidential

veto of the ban on partial birth abortions and calling upon the government to enact legislation which would protect 'the unique value of all human life' and prohibit 'the wanton or arbitrary destruction of any human being at any stage in its development'" (CRC's statement on abortion, *Acts of Synod 1972*, pp.63-64).

Delegates wanted to be sure that the media understood that synod's No vote to Overture 15 was not a vote about abortion itself, but about procedure. Delegate George Vandervelde

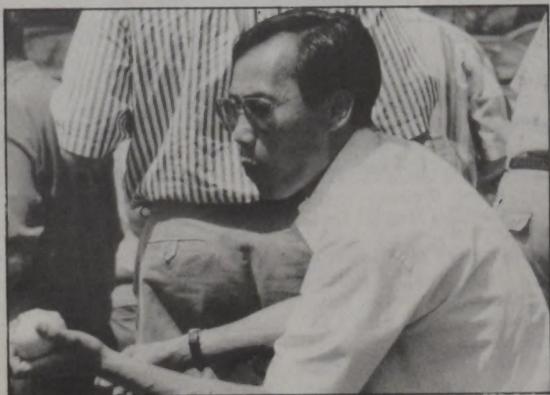
(elder, Cl. Toronto) asserted that one can't ask synod to provide additional grounds for a decision it made 25 years ago.

Using a club

Some delegates were afraid that Classis Wisconsin's overture was motivated by a less than charitable spirit toward fellow church members, and specifically toward Dr. Hessel Bouma, a biology professor at Calvin College who has written a book containing statements about abortion which have been criticized for not being clear enough about when life begins.

Delegate Marvin Hoogland (minister, Cl. Chicago South) asserted that a study committee "may not be used as a club to punish people. I'm afraid that this overture is being brought in that spirit. Scripture is often used as that kind of club as well. But Scripture is an instrument of grace." In the same vein, Rev. Clayton Libolt (Cl. Lake Erie) said, "It was the Pharisees who used Scripture to condemn people."

Synod also declined to form a committee to study euthanasia, taking note that the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC) has circulated and is still revising a statement on the issue.



'Coffee' break: One of synod's ethnic advisors, Sucheth Na, enjoys a coffee break in the sun. But he apparently doesn't suffer from the Dutch addiction to coffee.

Report analyzes effects of modern culture on worship



Pastors Jack Hielema and Len Batterink (Cl. B.C. North-West) participate in worship at synod.

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Synod 1997 has approved a report on worship which it believes will help local churches evaluate their worship practices and understand how contemporary societal forces are affecting how we worship.

Three years ago, Synod 1994 asked the standing worship committee of the CRC to re-examine issues related to how the church worships. It was noted that extensive changes are taking place in Christian Reformed worship and Christian worship in general, and that the last time the CRC addressed the issue was nearly 30 years ago, in 1968.

Crucial questions

The worship committee was asked to study these questions:

* What are the essentials of public Christian worship? What is non-negotiable in a Reformed setting? How do the Reformed confessions and our expression of our faith determine our approach to worship?

* How do the various cultural realities come to expression with the diversity now current in the church?

* How are the four motifs identified in the CRC's 1968 report on worship (it must be "biblical," "catholic," "confessional," "pastoral") expressed in our worship? Can an emphasis on the pastoral motif become so dominant that the other three are ignored?

* How does the church maintain its biblical and Reformed character in the current climate?

* For whom is worship intended — the believer? the seeker? both? Can sound principles of worship guide the church in providing worship that glorifies

God, that expresses the heartfelt covenantal commitment of God's people, and that draws others into the circle of faith? (See *Acts of Synod 1994*, pp. 526-527.)

Available for local study

The worship committee presented its answers to these questions in a report called "Authentic Worship in a Changing Culture." The report, which can be found in the *Agenda for Synod 1997*, will be published separately by CRC Publications, accompanied by discussion questions for use by churches' adult education classes, worship committees, councils and other groups.

The report presents principles on worship and analyzes contemporary cultural forces on worship, including the influence of the worldwide liturgical movement, the charismatic movement, the growing movement which considers public worship a primary vehicle for evangelism, the enrichment of cultural diversity.

The report ends with what several delegates called "the most helpful" set of questions and answers about concrete worship situations that they had ever seen.

CRC Publications will develop supplementary educational materials based on the report and will conduct workshops across the denomination on some of the issues it raises.

Synod passed a resolution "encouraging the churches to familiarize their worship leaders and planners with the principles and recommendations of this report."

In addition, the CRC worship committee will consult with

Worship principles endorsed

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Synod encourages church members to study the complete report, "Authentic Worship in a Changing Culture," but it summarized and endorsed the following principles and observations from the report, and "commends them to the churches":

a. A biblical-theological approach to worship must embrace strengths and critique weaknesses in worship at every point on the contemporary worship continuum; it will resist simplistic either/or choices and will reject the use of labels that polarize the church and caricatures that misrepresent the sincere attempts of fellow believers to worship.

b. A biblical-theological approach to worship demands discerning analysis of the powerful cultural forces that presently (sic) affect the church's life and worship:

1. Cultural assimilation brings greater exposure to other Christian traditions and a declining interest in preserving specific beliefs and customs that have distinguished one tradition from another.

2. A pervasive consumer culture increases the church's awareness of the various needs and expectations of those it desires to reach with the gospel, but a consumer culture may also tempt the church to accept consumer preferences rather than biblical or historical principles as primary determinants of its ministry and worship.

3. Rapid change in all areas of life makes it increasingly difficult for the church to develop the positive, healthy traditions essential to shaping Christian community identity.

4. The shift from a culture of discourse to a culture of entertainment, especially as promoted by television, calls into question many of the ways in which the church has historically understood and communicated the Word.

5. A widespread emphasis on felt needs and on self-fulfillment as the highest human good carries with it a temptation to reduce the message of the gospel to therapeutic categories.

6. The prevalence of economic anxieties, family breakdown, addiction, stress, and violence in contemporary society means that people now come to church primarily in search of healing for pain and meaningful answers to pressing personal concerns.

c. A biblical-theological approach to worship underscores the following general norms:

1. Certain enduring biblical components serve as a common basis in all Christian worship, including:

a. that worship is an ascription of worth, adora-

tion, and praise to God;

b. that this worship naturally includes confession of sin and surrender to the true God;

c. that this worship is a God-initiated engagement of God and the worshiper, as well as a corporate/communal engagement among the worshippers, both locally and universally;

d. that worship strengthens and is strengthened by the Christian community and must build upon the shared memory, shared meaning and shared traditions of a particular community.

e. that worship reflects the mighty, redemptive acts of God.

2. There is a basic biblical dynamic of worship: when God's people worship with pure hearts and in authentic community, and when that community is ever renewing and being renewed in its worship, then effective evangelism, i.e., the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ to those outside the community of faith, is the natural outgrowth.

3. There is a recurring, community-constituting basic pattern of Christian worship: gathering as a covenant community, proclamation of the Word, celebration of the Lord's Supper, going out for service in the world (*elaborated in the 1968 liturgical report*, pp. 142-55).

4. Authentic worship has an intrinsically sacramental character: in worship, certain elements from the stuff of creation — water, bread and wine, the human words of the sermon — become Spirit-charged, identity-shaping vehicles of God's grace.

5. Christians do not need to fear diversity in authentic worship: Christians of diverse backgrounds enrich one another when they come together in Christ, and when growth and change take place among people whose hearts are right and who are in Christian community, God is praised in ever-expanding and ever-deeper ways.

6. Worship cannot be separated from evangelism. Although the church does not gather in worship primarily for evangelism, the church must worship in ways that call people to faith and life in Christ.

7. The historic strengths in worship of the Reformed community deserve continuing cultivation.

These include:

a. a redemptive-historical perspective that takes seriously the rich communion of relationships involved in worship;

b. a healthy trinitarian balance within worship;

c. the Calvinist theology of preaching and the sacraments;

d. a strong appreciation for the Psalms and the Old Testament in general;

e. an emphasis on the importance of congregational singing.

the soon-to-be formed Calvin Worship Institute, Calvin Theological Seminary, CRC Home Missions, CR World Missions, Pastoral Ministries and the Youth Ministries Committee

during the next five years, assessing whether their work is reflecting the worship principles of this report. Synod wanted to assure that the seminary and all the church's ministries which

teach and engage in worship are doing so consistently and consciously aware of the worship principles the church espouses. The worship committee will report again to Synod 2000.

Synod adopts revised guidelines re: abuse

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Synod adopted a revised set of guidelines for handling abuse allegations against church leaders. The revisions mainly involved clarifications and nuanced changes. After a couple of important further revisions on the floor of synod, the guidelines were adopted with the agreement of the denominational abuse prevention committee (a division of Pastoral Ministries) and Abuse Prevention's director, Beth Swagman.

The guidelines were designed to make it easier for women alleging abuse to come forward, and to spell out a just and proper procedure for church councils to deal with abuse perpetrated by church leaders.

In 1994 the concept of an independent body of people to review allegations of abuse against church leaders was introduced. Synod's advisory committee explained the short history of the subject, noting that a report to Synod 1994 "recommended that allegations of abuse be reviewed by a body composed of church members



Beth Swagman, Abuse Prevention director

not belonging to the church or the churches of the alleged victim and alleged offender in order to avoid the emotional stress of hearing allegations against or by persons known to the body."

"In spite of some weaknesses" in the 1994 report, Synod 1994 recommended the concept to the churches for study. After suggestions were submitted to Beth Swagman, the relationship between the review body and councils/consistories was thoroughly reviewed. Legal counsel was also sought, in the U.S. and in Canada.

Refinement

Synod 1995 then approved a set of guidelines "for use in the churches as a model, and for local adoption." But that synod recommended that the council/consistory be the adjudicatory body, and that the newly named advisory panel function only in an advisory capacity to the council/consistory.

Last year, primarily because revised guidelines were not ready in time to be printed in the synod agenda, Synod 1996 gave provisional approval to the guidelines, recommending that Pastoral Ministries "be instructed to engage in their further 'refinement' in order 'to present a final set of proposed guidelines to the churches by November 1, 1996, for study and response to Synod 1997...."

Synod 1997 did "refine" the guidelines. An introduction to the guidelines explains why abuse victims may not trust the church to handle their complaint and urges each classis to set up an advisory panel to help councils/consistories deal with abuse allegations.

The guidelines begin with

definitions and procedural alternatives; they outline 13 "suggested procedures and guidelines" when the victim is an adult and then seven guidelines if the victim is a child. The guidelines end with "five important footnotes"

regarding both sets of guidelines. The footnotes present additional information and reminders for churches.

The revised guidelines will be printed and available to the churches in the near future.

Inclusive language for God 'unacceptable'

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Synod recommended to the churches a study report on inclusive language for God as "a sound and helpful analysis of gendered language for God as found in Scripture and in contemporary inclusive-language practices."

The 108-page report concluded that contemporary inclusive language for God — that is, "the broad gender-egalitarian and/or gender-neutral approach advocated in mainstream academic and ecclesiastical discussions" — "is unacceptable in the Christian Reformed Church."

Synod endorsed that position, stating five reasons. Such language:

- "presents a significantly different view of God than the language of Scripture does";
- "confuses, undermines, or conflicts with the church's confessional-doctrinal understanding of the Trinity and the person of Christ";
- "involves faulty linguistic, exegetical and theological

reasoning";

d."presupposes views of Scripture or employs methods of interpreting Scripture that are incompatible with the church's confession about the nature and authority of Scripture";

e. "is spiritually dangerous in refusing to accept God as he has revealed himself."

The committee which wrote the report included two biblical scholars, Dr. Al Wolters, who teaches classical languages and Old Testament at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont., and Dr. John W. Cooper, professor of philosophical theology at Calvin Seminary. Other committee members were chairperson Mirth Vos, a personal and family therapist in Barry, Ont.; Lorna Van Gilst, an English professor at Dordt College; LeRoy Christoffels, pastor of Preakness CRC in Wayne, N.J.; and Jai-Sung Shim, "on loan" to the CRC from the Korean Presbyterian Church in Saginaw, Mich.

Look for a full report on this subject, including participant comments, in next week's issue.

Synod urges attention to 'just stewardship' of creation

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — When the Reformed Ecumenical Council met last year on its 50th anniversary, it approved a book-length report on how Reformed Christians can respond appropriately to ongoing environmental concerns. REC asked its member churches, including the Christian Reformed Church, to use the report, *Just Stewardship of Land and Creation*. It was

also noted that environmental issues in Africa are particularly acute.

The CRC synod decided that it should do more than just acknowledge REC's report. So it did four things to try to increase environmental stewardship among church members:

- * It requested the editors of *Reformed Worship* to prepare four liturgies on the just stewardship of land and

creation, within one year.

* It requested the editor of *The Banner* to prepare at least one article in the next year on this subject.

* It "urged" pastors to preach on the just stewardship of land and creation within the next year.

* It "encouraged" CRC congregations to make use of the booklet *Earth-Wise* available from CRC Publications.

No classes based on ideology

Marian van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — After a long and sometimes passionate debate, synod voted not to accede to overtures which wanted the church to form at least four "theologically identified" classes.

Overture 4, brought by Classis California South, asserted that the "unrest" created by synod's decisions "relative to women in office" would be stopped by the formation of such classes and that the formation of such classes would "ad-

vance the cause of Jesus Christ."

Synod's advisory committee on the issue split evenly, with seven members in favor of theologically identified classes and seven opposed.

Those opposed argued that such classes would be "foreign to Reformed church government, would actually further fragment the church rather than unite it, would impair classical ministries, would create pockets of likeminded people who would not have to deal with those who disagreed with them

and be detrimental to the cause of Christ."

Though neither side of the advisory committee was convinced that "sufficient and new grounds" had been presented to even deal with the issue again (Synod 1996 rejected theologically identified classes), those in favor asked synod to consider the issue anyway because "the unity and harmony of the denomination are precious and compelling reasons to reconsider the decision of Synod 1996."

Deacons may be delegates to classis

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — For some 35 years synod has periodically received overtures asking that deacons be allowed to be delegated to classis meetings. CRC synods have said no — until now.

Currently each congregation in a classis sends a minister and an elder to classis meetings. From now on, each classis may decide if it wants to make use of deacons as delegates.

If it does, all the churches in that classis must participate, sending three delegates — a minister, an elder and a deacon. If it does not, no congregation may send deacon delegates to meetings of that classis. Deacons may not yet be delegated to synod.

One reason this has been a contentious issue is that since 1984, women have been allowed to be deacons, and those who oppose women being ordained have opposed them being delegated to the churches assemblies.

But in discussion it was pointed out that this issue is about the importance of deacons, not about "women in office," and that view prevailed.

Church

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
★ Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

God exalts the humble, not the ignorant

One of our readers sent me a long letter in which he compared me and all ministers in the Christian Reformed Church with the "wise and understanding" from whom the Lord of heaven and earth has hidden his mysteries. But he counted himself among the "little children" to whom God has revealed his plan of the ages (cf. Matt. 11:25). Then he set forth the theories of those who think that the present state of Israel is God's work in preparation of Jesus' 1,000-year reign in Jerusalem.

It's the brother's good right to disagree with me about the millennium. But it isn't fair to declare me blind and to place himself (and Hal Lindsey) on the side of the angels.

There has always been an unbiblical trend in the church which blesses ignorance and is suspicious of learning. Today I find it especially among preachers of the Southern States. They popularized the theory that everyone can understand all of God's Word because "God says what he means and he means what he says." It's all literally true and must be believed with childlike faith. As one of them said, "I do believe that the whale swallowed Jonah; but if the Bible said that Jonah swallowed the whale, I'd still believe it."

There are great dangers in ignorance as well as in great learning. When we lose humility before God, we lose everything. The oddest form of pride is the pride of ignorance. Once I appeared before a consistory to give account of my conviction that God does not exclude women from ministry in his church. Most of the men in that council had been my catechumens 25 years earlier, but none asked for information. Some started every attack by saying, "I don't have much education, BUT..." Little education is no shame; but being proud of it is.

The International Bible Society planned to publish a new version of the NIV Bible (through Zondervan) that would be more "gender accurate" than the present one. But plans were cancelled last month when a furor arose among evangelical Christians (especially Southern Baptists) who said that "they" had caved in to feminists (see story in last week's CC).

On the whole I am very critical of the way we go about Bible translating and Bible publishing in North America. Translating is blatantly sectarian and selling Bibles does not differ from any other form of commerce. However, this proposed translation merely wanted to say that, when the Bible declares, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked," God extends the same blessing to the woman who stays out of the company of the sinners.

That used to be assumed, but today that needs saying. And the New Testament word *anthropos* does not mean "man" but "mens" (Dutch) or "Mensch" (German). *Anthropology* is not a study of males but of people. Therefore, it's perfectly all right to produce a translation that tries to broaden the meaning of "man." Christians, including pastors and teachers, who attack such proposed changes in a translation are not fighting for the truth but defending their comfort zones. And a publishing venture that caves in for such pressure is not so stalwart either.

Andrew Kuyvenhoven is a retired Christian Reformed pastor and former Banner editor who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

CRC missionaries to four continents

Mark Volkers

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — In June and July, more than 50 people will receive training and last-minute instructions before going to four continents around the world. In its annual orientation school, Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) will offer training and logistics to summer volunteers, one- and two-year volunteers and career missionaries.

This year, 39 young people will go to Nigeria, Japan, Philippines, China, Hong Kong and Mexico with the Summer Missions Program (SMP). Begun in 1989, the SMP was formed to offer college-age people and seminary students an opportunity to experience hands-on ministry in a cross-cultural setting.

Also attending this year's orientation school will be 19 people who will serve in eight countries for one or two years. These short-term missionaries provide valuable assistance in providing education for missionary children, evangelism and teaching in primary and secondary schools.

This year's crop of new missionaries also includes eight

long-term or career missionaries. One family, Tom and Debbie de Ruiter and their five children, will be leaving their home in Pembroke, Ont., to begin service among the Fulani people of Mali, West Africa. Speaking from her home, Debbie said, "It is our hope that as a family, we may be a strong witness wherever we are planted."

Before leaving, appointees spend part of their summer in the orientation school at the

CRC offices and on the campus of Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids. Training covers a variety of topics, including health in other countries, cross-cultural awareness, communications, evangelism and logistics.

Founded in 1888, CRWM has sent out over 1,000 missionaries in its 109 years of service. There are currently more than 300 missionaries serving with the Christian Reformed agency in 30 countries around the world.

Praise for Christians staying in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (EP) — During his last crusade in Hong Kong before the colony is turned over to Communist rule on June 30, evangelist Luis Palau this past April praised believers who are planning to stay put. In an article appearing in the May 19, 1997, issue of *Christianity Today*, Palau declared those who would remain were doing so because they sensed God's leading. Palau suggested to 130,000 listeners that they could possess hope and op-

timism about new opportunities the future would bring, specifically the spiritual salvation of millions of Chinese.

Observers estimate that one out of four Christians have already evacuated from Hong Kong (or hold passports to enable them to do so before the transition occurs). On the day prior to Palau's crusade, Chinese officials announced that new laws would restrict rights of public protest and free association.

FROM COAST TO COAST

ENGLISH RADIO:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan - CKAY.....	10:00	1500
Burns Lake-CFLD.....	9:15am	1400
Kitimat-CKTK.....	8:30am	1230
Osoyoos-CJOR.....	8:00am	1490
Penticton-CKOR.....	8:00am	800
Port Alberni-CJAY.....	7:00pm	1240
Prince George-CIRX.....	7:00am	94.3
Princeton-CHOR.....	8:00am	1400
Smithers-CFBV.....	9:15am	1230
Summerland-CHOR.....	8:00am	1450
Vernon-CJIB.....	9:30pm	940

QUEBEC

Montreal - CIBC.....	7:30am	600
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ALBERTA

Brooks-CIBO.....	8:00am	1340
Edson-CJYR.....	10:00am	970
Ft. McMurray-CJOK.....	8:30am	1230
High River-CHRB.....	6:30pm	1280
St. Albert-CHMG.....	8:00am	104.9
Edmonton - CKER.....	11:00pm	101.9

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL.....	8:00am	1280
Weyburn-CFSL.....	8:00am	1190

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM.....	9:30am	950
Steinbach-CHSM.....	9:30am	1250
Winnipeg-CKJS.....	9:15am	810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK.....	9:30am	1240
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Chatham-CFCO.....	6:30am	630
Fort Frances-CFOB.....	9:30am	640
Guelph - CJOY.....	8:30am	1460
Hamilton-CHAM.....	7:30am	1280
Kapuskasing-CKAP.....	9:00am	580
Kingston-WLKC.....	7:30am	100.7
Newmarket-CKDX.....	9:30am	88.5
Oshawa-CKAR.....	8:00am	1350
Owen Sound-CFOS.....	10:30am	560
Pembroke-CHVR.....	10:00am	96.7
St. Catharines-CKTB.....	7:30pm	610
Samia-CHOK.....	7:30am	1070
Stratford-CJCS.....	8:45am	1240
Windsor-CKLW.....	8:30am	580
Wingham-CKNX.....	10:30am	920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm).....	8:00am	102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ.....	9:30am	700
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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY.....	7:00am	630
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NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY.....	6:00am	1420
Kentville-CKEN.....	8:30am	1490
Middleton-CKAD.....	8:30am	1350
New Glasgow-CKEC.....	7:30am	1320
Sydney-CJCB.....	8:00am	1270
Weymouth-CKDY.....	8:30am	103.1
Windsor-CFAB.....	8:30am	1450

TELEVISION:

Faith 20-TV (Monday to Friday)

Ontario 5:30am
on the Global TV Network

Check your local listings for cable outlets airing *Faith 20*.

Alberta - Lethbridge - CJLL
.....Thursday - 9:00pm
.....Saturday - 12:00noon

Vision-TV (every Saturday)

British Columbia 7:00 & 10:00pm
Alberta 8:00 & 11:00pm
Sask. & Manitoba..... 6:00 & 9:00pm
Ontario & Quebec..... 7:00 & 10:00pm
Nfld., N.B., N.S. & P.E.I. 8:00 & 11:00pm



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Feature

When a soul waits

by
Jan Johnson

As the clock struck midnight, all the couples at the New Year's Eve party kissed, except Greg and me. Finally, my friend said, "Come on, Greg, give your wife a kiss." So Greg gave me a token peck. I trembled at this first physical contact in years but I tried to act as if it were nothing. After all, it was nothing but a socially conventional behavior forced by circumstances.

Three years before, my husband Greg told me that he hated me and planned to leave. I sat quietly as he listed for me the offenses I had committed. At one point, he produced a list of 10 criticisms I'd launched on him within one hour before work one morning. I couldn't defend myself. He was right.

I asked Greg to forgive me and I worked very hard to change. I read self-help books, held in my anger till my eyes crossed, and finally landed in a support group. There I talked about the rage that had grown within me since childhood and I became accountable for my critical behavior.

During the next two years, I changed dramatically. Still, Greg's heart did not change, except that he felt nothing instead of hatred. I felt even more alone. I could imagine how I looked from miles out in the atmosphere: one person completely alone casting a long shadow behind myself. It was just God and me now. I berated myself; I cried many times a day; I stared at oncoming trains at railroad crossings and imagined pulling out in front of the engine.

Greg didn't have the energy to leave, he said. He thought I would, but I couldn't because I wanted to stand before God on judgment day with my marriage intact. Part of that was a desire to obey God and another part was pride. I felt like such a second-class Christian for having a dead marriage. I also wanted to save my kids from the pain of divorce — and I stayed because I loved Greg. I didn't

realize until the day he confronted me what a patient, generous person he was, and I was charmed by him.

Fearing abandonment

My darkest reason for staying was that I feared abandonment. Having someone who didn't notice me was better than having no one at all. I wasn't sure I could get up in the morning without someone to lean on. I felt jealous of other couples who argued a lot, but still loved each other. We never argued, we never loved. What was I going to do about me now that no one loved me?

One by one, avenues of God's love made him more real to me. My support demonstrated God's unrelenting love each time I confessed my fierce anger to the group. I looked up expecting to see condemning faces, but instead I saw gentle smiles and nodding heads accepting me and my rage. Their faces became the loving face of God for me so that I muttered Romans 5:3 many times a day: "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." I began to believe that God loved me as much on the days I hated myself as He did on the days when I was cheery and sweet.

In solitude, I cried out to God. I walked in a nearby cemetery, screaming out those painful, unexplainable Psalms in which David groaned in the night and drowned his bed with tears. I lay down next to tombstones and grieved for God to come inside me and convince every cell in my body that he loved me. I cried in the shower leaning against the wall tiles, asking God to rescue me from my regret, self-pity and self-hate. Little by little, I began to believe that God loved me in my ugliest moments and walked with me each minute.

Surrendering dreams

In the safety of these moments, I faced the fact that



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As the clock struck midnight, all the couples at the New Year's Eve party kissed, except Greg and me.

Greg's heart might never change. Over and over I surrendered my dreams of reconciliation. With God's love as the only basis for my self-worth, I decided I could face living the rest of my life in a relationship where I was not loved. I could be obedient to God and stay in that marriage with no guarantee that anything would ever improve. Occasionally I got on my high horse ("I deserved something better!"), but one day I wrote, "I have changed to please you, God, not Greg. Even if he never changes, I'll still be glad you changed me."

As I sensed God's companionship, I took delight in giving to Greg without trying to change his mind or make him like me again. It was a grand experience to try to love someone and leave their freedom intact.

In this waiting room of sur-

render we sat for several years. Some would say they were wasted years, but even marriages that offer little to brag about can be of great value. We helped and respected each other like brother and sister. We loved our children. We reached out to friends and neighbors. My imperfect marriage did not make me a hopeless and unworthy Christian.

Imperceptible road to reconciliation

Those years of dry desert gave Greg room to work through his feelings so he could learn to enjoy the person I had become. We eased into reconciliation so slowly that I didn't know it was happening. Finally, one day on the telephone Greg said, "I love you," just before he hung up. Stunned, I almost said, "Are you sure?"

My story cannot be reduced to a formula. I never viewed my willingness to wait as a way of earning Greg's love back. It could have gone the other way. We were both ripe for affairs and that's what usually happens in these cases.

Only by God's grace did I understand that I had expected Greg to meet the inner needs only God could meet. Greg couldn't give me the unrelenting attention I needed; he couldn't assure me that I was a valuable person; he couldn't wash away my mistakes. Only God can do those things. In the rawest edges of life, I find the courage to face each day as I believe in my heart that God loves me no matter what.

Jan Johnson is a retreat speaker and author of Enjoying the Presence of God. She lives in Simi, Calif.

The Hong Kong takeover and the church

by Tony Campolo

I just returned from Hong Kong. My mind is spinning with the images of impressions I gathered there.

If there is a need to prove the success of capitalism, that need can be met on the streets of this royal colony. The blinding neon lights that seem to be hanging everywhere over the crowded streets attest to the role of advertising in this fierce market society. The BMWs and Mercedes that dominate the traffic are evidence that there is big money in town. And the hundreds of soaring apartment buildings provide ample testimony to the ingenuity of a people who, in just a couple of decades, have figured out how to house 6.5 million people.

Ironically, this citadel of capitalism is about to be taken over by Communist China.

As I came away from Hong Kong, I was somewhat troubled. I found that the churches of the colony are mostly pastored by young ministers in their 20s or early 30s. Many of the older church leaders have left to avoid the consequences of the communist takeover. They are shepherds who have abandoned their flocks in the face of impending danger, and the Bible has something to say about shepherds like that.

Does Christ make us rich?

Another troubling sign is that the mainline churches of Hong Kong show signs of having been seduced by the affluence of the colony, and of having lost their zeal for evangelism. Non-traditional churches are also a cause for concern. For instance, Pentecostal churches seem to have bought into a prosperity theology. I found these Pentecostal Christians very difficult to figure out, since they know that just a few miles across the border are millions of Christians reduced to poverty because of their faithfulness to Christ.

I often asked, "If faithfulness to Christ makes people rich, then how come the Christians in [mainland] China are so poor?" Perhaps these churches need the challenges that will come with the communist takeover and their new relationship with the Christians on the other side of the bamboo curtain. What will it be like for them to suddenly be connected with the underground church in China that, in just three decades, has grown to 30 million from 900,000? What will the churches of Hong Kong learn from those Christians across the border whose faith has been greatly strengthened in the face of government oppression?

No word on exploitation

What especially disturbed me about the churches of Hong Kong was the extent to which their people had reduced the gospel to an individualistic salvation that was weak on issues of social justice. As a case in point, I was extremely upset to find that there are about 150,000

Filipino congregation. It was one of the most unusual experiences of my life. There were approximately 1,000 women and only two men present. Many of these women had left husbands and children behind, often at the encouragement of their husbands, who wanted the extra money that could be made in Hong Kong. But neither the Hong Kong churches nor the churches of the Philippines had much to say about this exploitation of women.

Economics comes first

Before I make any further judgments, I suppose I ought to say something about how the United States is about to make an impact on people in both Hong Kong and China. We are about to once again grant Most Favored Nation status to China. This will guarantee free trade between our nations; which in turn, is supposed to benefit both them and us.

Maybe I am missing something here. But if there is an imbalance of trade with China that has left us with a \$290 billion dollar deficit for 1996, I fail to see why this is supposed to be such a good deal for us — especially when we consider how many American workers could lose their jobs in this bargain. However, if we are going to deal with China, ought we not to try to extract some concessions on the human rights issues in

return?

I spent an afternoon with an exiled dissident from Tiananmen Square. His life will be in severe danger come the takeover on July 1. Shouldn't we use the granting of Most Favored Nation status as a bargaining chip in exchange for freedom for such dissidents who dare to defy totalitarianism? Ought we not to be demanding some real freedom of religion in China in exchange for the financial bonanza it is about to receive from us?

I am behind the call for rejection of Most Favored Nation status for China, unless there is some reciprocation with human rights concessions. Economic considerations should not obliterate moral considerations when it comes to national policy. It is time for Christians of every political persuasion to join together and oppose MFN status for China. Making human rights more important than cutting a deal that helps big business should be something that all Christians, everywhere, can make a matter of agreement.

Hong Kong as a British colony is coming to an end. Christians everywhere should be asking what can be achieved for God's Kingdom when China takes over.

Tony Campolo is the director of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education in St. Davids, Pennsylvania.



North Point and Causeway Bay in Hong Kong.



Shanghai Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

Filipino maids in Hong Kong who experience incredible racial discrimination and scandalous sexual harassment from their employers — many of them "Christians." The church leaders in Hong Kong have had little say against these social injustices, and have done almost nothing to change the laws to provide protection for these women.

On the last Sunday I was in Hong Kong I preached for a

Arts/Media

Video Review

Lone Star shines brightly in the video sky

Marian Van Til

Lone Star

Stars Chris Cooper, Kris Kristofferson, Elizabeth Pena, Frances McDormand. Written, directed and produced by John Sayles.

This film, released in theatres last year, is another one of those creations that was acclaimed by critics but which remained largely undiscovered by the average film audience during its (short) theatre run. It's definitely worth a look on video.



Chris Cooper as Sheriff Sam Deeds

Lone Star has been referred to as a modern-day Western. That's true in terms of its Texas setting and the pervading frontier mentality of the local residents, but that shouldn't give one the wrong idea — that it's a straightforward shoot-'em-up, good guys versus bad guys.

In reference to the title, Texas is the "Lone Star State"; but the epithet is also multi-layered, able to be associated with one or more of the story's sheriff characters, who wear star-shaped badges and who tend to be loners.

Sam Deeds (Chris Cooper) is the sheriff of Rio County, the county seat of which is a border town lying up against the Rio Grande River and Mexico. The area has had a turbulent history which most recently has seen Mexicans (legal and illegal), Anglos, blacks and a few Kickapoo Indians settle next to each other and work together in a not-always-peaceful coalition. The area seems to simultaneously breed a peculiar mixture of

individualistic pioneer spirits and don't-rock-the-boat types.

Rousting a sleeping dog

When a treasure hunter discovers a human skeleton in the nearby desert, along with a rusted sheriff's badge, Sam has to be involved in the investigation. It turns out the man, dead for some 30 years, was Charlie Wade, then a much-feared sheriff whose specialty was extorting money and favors from the locals he was pledged to protect.

Sam thinks the likely suspect is Buddy Deeds, his father. Trouble is, Buddy, who succeeded Wade as sheriff when the latter disappeared one night with an ill-gotten \$10,000 (so the story went), is dead. And to hear people talk, Buddy Deeds was a veritable legend, as upright as Charlie Wade was dirty.

When word gets out to the town that the dead man was Wade, no one seems to believe that the elder Deeds could have killed him. But for reasons that gradually become clear, Sam has a far less charitable view of his late father.

A complicated tapestry

Writer-director-producer John Sayles reveals and then weaves together, at a leisurely Texas pace, the individual threads of a fascinating story which discloses the complicated interracial relationships (some public, many not) between the local residents.

Many of these people are not quite what they seem. But Sayles doesn't paint saints and villains; he avoids the good-guy/bad-guy portraits which populate traditional Westerns. The many characters in *Lone Star* are "normal" vulnerable human beings, each comprising a range of good and bad traits, some more flawed than others. Wade is the only character who has a true heart of darkness.

The threads of Sayles story culminate in an ending that's surprising but not shocking, and then in a kind of postscript that's morally shocking but not surprising — given the way Sayles has developed the characters.

This film embodies an intriguing, sometimes unsettling story, expertly told, a story which raises moral and social issues worth discussing.

Book Review

Author addresses dilemmas facing Christian teachers

Letters to Lisa

by John Van Dyk.

Sioux Center, Iowa: Dordt College Press, 1997.
Reviewed by Alyce Oosterhuis.

Letters to Lisa: Conversations with a Christian Teacher is John Van Dyk's latest publication to introduce teachers in Christian schools to the complex issue and dilemmas that occur in the course of trying to teach "Christianly."

Using the framework of e-mail conversations between himself and his daughter Lisa, a fifth grade teacher with two years experience, John Van Dyk touches on 22 issues that often confront the classroom teacher: teaching Christianly; learning objectives; academic excellence; discipleship; content or students; didactic delivery; worksheets; classroom questioning; climate; individual differences; assessment; competition vs. co-operation; learning styles; at-risk students; curriculum and Christian perspectives; Christians in public schools; devotions in the classroom; professionalism.

The book uses a relaxed and "chatty" style that conveys an authentic conversation between a father and daughter, especially since the tone is quite paternalistic.

Resolution too facile

Dialoguing with a teacher as she begins her third year of practice is an excellent starting point. My first year of teaching was consumed by survival needs; the second year was devoted to discerning what it means to teach; only in the third year did I begin to ask myself what it meant to teach in a Christian school.

However, unlike Lisa, I would have wanted to have had a more genuine dialogue or a debate of the issues John Van Dyk raises. Lisa's acceptance of father John's words as definite on most issues makes the dilemmas too facile in their resolution. Many of the educational issues addressed are "huge and complicated subjects" (p.6) that constitute life-long struggles with "inexhaustible topics."

The most striking feature of John Van Dyk's rendition of the resolutions to educational dilemmas is his quest for inclusiveness. For example, when asked about measurable performance objectives in teacher planning, he does not dismiss such objectives as inspired by behaviorism and hence to be avoided in the Christian school, but stresses that they are "one type of objective that is useful for planning lessons on content and basic skills... that need to be balanced with expressive objectives" (p.20).

Or when asked about the emphasis on academic excellence in Christian schools, he emphasizes that, although "intellectualism" and a "Christian philosophy of education" cannot function in a coexistence of compromise in the classroom, "critical thinking, ...and cognitive taxonomies are important and may not be neglected" (p.30).

Towards a seamless whole

This inclusiveness is illustrative of the mindset of a seasoned classroom veteran. Having lived and worked through many pen-

dulum swings on the various educational bandwagons of the last three decades, John Van Dyk recognizes that "wherever the will of God is done, even by unbelievers [who emphasize humanistic humanitarian activities], there is reason for rejoicing" (p.40). Sin and redemption coexist in the curriculum, classroom, the human heart, and our task is not to judge, lest we be judged. "The ultimate goal of teaching Christianly cannot be head knowledge or A's on a report card, but to live in both word and deed, according to the intentions of God" (p.41). And God's intentions are at the core of the question of "How do we meet the central purpose of our [Christian] schools?" (p.51).

In the spiralling, interactive framework that John proposes, all aspects of teaching and learning, whether that be a subject emphasis, student varieties, classroom climate, or grading practices, contribute to "a seamless, educational whole that spirals from beginning acquaintance to deepening insight."

Avoiding reductionism

Although John Van Dyk claims not to be "daydreaming about a Deweyan democracy of yesteryear" (p.131), his emphasis on shared responsibility, collaborative learning strategies, individualized instruction and the multi-faceted nature of children, does place him as leaning favorably towards those who have been described as "progressive educators" in this century.

This stance is the consequence of his desire to model an authentic Christian education that affects our curriculum, perspective, actions, interpersonal relations and professionalism. Whenever a school or a teacher emphasizes one aspect such as discipline, grading, or Christian vocabulary as the hallmark of its effectiveness, there is a danger of reductionism. "Reductionism limits the Lordship of Christ" (p.166) and the central mission of Christian schools.

Letters to Lisa concludes with the acknowledgement that teaching Christianly is a lifelong task that is never finished. But it is that for which we must strive. The ultimate question for the Christian teacher in the public or Christian school is: Are you *working at* modeling God's love, grace, peace, and reconciliation in your relationships, pedagogy, atmosphere, curriculum, assessments and devotions?

John Van Dyk's slim volume reads easily and quickly. To do justice to many of the issues he raises, teachers will need to focus on one section at a time for discussion and greater indepth analysis of the many philosophical, historical, psychological, and sociological complexities that have an impact on education today.

However, as an inspirational source, John models the compassion, care and lifelong dedication to being a Christ-follower in the framework, diagrams and images that affect the hearts, minds and actions of those who read his words. I just wish he had been more collegial than paternalistic with Lisa.

Alyce Oosterhuis teaches educational psychology at The King's University College, Edmonton.

Environment

Five indoor pest solutions

TORONTO (NC) — Summer is upon us and you may be finding that your garden isn't the only place where there's all sorts of new life. Here are five ideas about how to handle the pests without polluting the environment.

1. **Ants:** Locate the place of entry, squeeze a lemon onto it and leave the peel. Ants will also retreat from lines of talcum powder, chalk, damp coffee grounds, bone meal, charcoal dust and cayenne pepper.

2. **Fruit flies:** Pour a small amount of beer into a wide-mouth jar. Put a plastic bag across the mouth of the jar with a rubber band. Poke a small hole in the bag. Flies will enter through the hole and not be able to find their way out again. Change the beer when necessary.

3. **Flies:** Sunny windows are flies' most common entrance into your home, so close

windows before the sun hits them. Use regular sticky flypaper to catch unwelcome flying guests. You can make your own with honey and yellow paper.

4. **House plants pests:** Blend 2 or 3 very hot peppers, 1/2 onion and 1 clove of garlic in water, boil, steep for two days and strain. Used as a spray, this concoction is for indoor and outdoor plants and can be frozen for future use. Also try spraying 2 tablespoons (30 mL) liquid soap, in 1 quart/litre of water. Remember to spray with fresh water (the shower can be used for this) a few days afterwards.

5. **Spiders:** Under ideal conditions, do not kill spiders because they help to control pests.

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- 3 The largest Chinook salmon ever caught weighed 126 pounds.
- 4 The phantom orchid is one of the rarest wildflowers in Canada and has been known to lie dormant ("sleep" in the ground) for up to 17 years.
- 5 Unlike a typical frog's "ribbit" sound, the cricket frog makes a sound like pebbles being clicked together.

For a free copy of "Endangered Zone, Living on the Edge: Canada's Species at Risk," write Greenpeace Information Office, 185 Spadina Avenue, Suite 604, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2C6. NC

The value of everything — are we tearing down our barns?

If you are old enough or young enough to have watched day-time quiz shows, you likely know "The Price Is Right." It's a granddaddy television quiz show. It's been around over three decades with the simple promise, "If you can tell me the price, you can have the goods."

Well, now I can tell you the price of everything! The best estimate for the entire biosphere, or at least the services that the biosphere is said to provide for us, has been published. The average value of the earth's ecosystem services is \$33 trillion (US) per year. This compares to an estimated \$18 trillion (US) per year total gross domestic product for the world's economic output.

What "this study makes abundantly clear," say the authors in *Nature* (May 15) "is that ecosystem services provide an important portion of the total contribution to human welfare on this planet." We can now begin to give them weight in policy decisions.

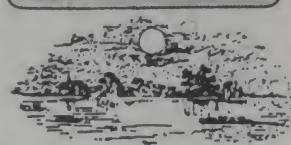
The price is right? — Wrong

The promise here is an old one. It is one we have been struggling with in many areas of life. Pricing items is a convenient short hand for assigning value. It lets us speed on to more important things. We can make judgments quickly if we know the price.

Our estimation of persons can rise if we know the value of their home, automobile or salary. If people don't respect something, we can simply put a price on it to demonstrate that someone cares for it. But we have been slow to put prices on the natural world. It seems priceless, so why even try?

To be fair, we must understand that this pricing of "everything" is actually quite limited. The natural capital — air, water, minerals — all remained outside this scheme. They are infinite in value and without them we cannot live. But we can put a value on the food and services produced by ecosystems, they say. We can assign a price to what the earth does for us each year.

Creation waits...



John Wood

Can we? It seems to me that if you can't figure out the value of an ecosystem without putting a price on it, you never will know its worth.

Other ways to show value

These economists claim that moral arguments for protecting ecosystems are too sticky to be useful in making political decisions. Two moral arguments can conflict and make it difficult to choose. For example, how do we choose between taking care of the environment and of feeding the hungry? Although moral and economic arguments are not mutually exclusive, they can go on forever on parallel but separate tracks. But will they do so? Experience shows, and I think the Scriptures teach, that one type of argument will eat up the other. If you must insist on an economic evaluation of everything, you will have it, but nothing more.

It is hard to underestimate the influence of the economic approach on our lives. It has made possible the substantial benefits we enjoy today. It has been no less than a blessing to us. But somehow we become obsessed with the blessing. We act as if that's all there is to life. We deny it, of course, but act that way nevertheless. The economic way of seeing things takes over and becomes all important. I suspect that the current effort to raise the profile of earth's worth in economic terms will backfire.

We do need to see the earth in new terms. But we need to find a way to restore our relationship to creation outside the economic nexus. Or else we may simply be tempted to tear down our current barns and build bigger ones (Luke 12).

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College in Edmonton.

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Advice

Churches must repent of family obsession

Dear P & M:

I have just moved to a new city and commute to work daily. I want to make my home here, not just have this be a place to sleep. But I struggle with going to church by myself. Some Sunday mornings are easier than others. There are some Sundays when I don't even leave the house; on other Sundays I drive into the church parking lot and right out again.

Our churches are very family oriented. Everything seems geared to couples with children. Single individuals in their late 20s and up find it difficult to fit in. Where and how do bachelorettes and bachelors fit into the local church family?

Dear Single Looking to Belong:

We all need a sense of belonging — a place of our own; a church to call home. The good news is that "God sets the lonely in families" (Ps. 68:6). That includes fitting you into this new church family.

We sense that you are quite shy and that you may lack the self-confidence required to get involved. Some people are just better at that sort of thing than others, right? So what should someone with an introverted personality do? And what should the church do?

Our advice is to call the pastor immediately and ask him or her whether there is a young adults elder to meet or a singles program to join, or some other group which interests you. Also ask whether the church has households of faith or fellowship groups or cell groups. You need to make some contacts in a smaller environment where you are more comfortable. Then, and only then, will you begin to experience church as family.

A small, yet important thing is to find someone with whom you can sit in church. Recently, a young woman began to worship with us after courageously trying a number of different churches. A couple of weeks later she stood by the front door and was mistaken for one of our greeters. She ended up shaking all kinds of hands until we came by and smiled about the fact that she had so soon been given the task of greeting. "Oh no," she said, "I'm waiting for my friend."

Her friend, as it turned out, was another young woman who had also recently joined our church. Two weeks earlier both of them had spontaneously said yes to an invitation by some of our other young adults. When they discovered that both were virtual strangers to our community they agreed to look for each other and sit together during the services.

By the way, it's not just other singles who save seats for each other. Every church has some married folks who have a real sensitivity in this area and also gladly welcome someone to sit with them.

Peter and Marja are IN



If you have what it takes to make your way in the working world, we're confident that you have what it takes to make your way into the church family. The key is starting small. Make that phone call, push yourself to meet some folks in a small group. And honestly let it be known that church is a more comfortable experience for you when you know that someone else is there waiting for you. That's what gives the sense of belonging.

What's a church to do? We need to constantly challenge each other to reach out to the stranger and the newcomer, as well as the shy, lonely person or couple who often stands apart. Frankly, we need to repent of the way we often socialize with family and friends to the exclusion of others. This kind of absorption with our own comfortable cliques becomes an excruciatingly painful experience for others trying to fit in.

Churches could offer training to their ushers, greeters and members in the art of making others welcome. All too often our conversations with newcomers amount to nothing more than trying to discover connections with relatives or friends that we have in common. That may work for Dutch folks whose family trees seem to brush branches with distant relatives in any Reformed church you might care to mention. But it's no way to have a conversation with someone who's ethnic and church background is different from yours.

Perhaps most importantly, churches need to assess their programs and small groups and ensure that they have provided enough opportunities to assimilate singles. Without a number of tracks by which someone can enter a church, someone like yourself may not succeed in fitting in.

Your letter affirms the church growth maxim which insists that "the key to the large church is the small group." The church blessed with many small groups, a friendly disposition and a willingness to reach out can be a real blessing to those looking for a place to belong. Your letter is an incentive for every church to examine how successful it is in setting the lonely into the family of faith.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lukken, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.



Marian den Boer

Absence makes the heart grow fonder

When Marty first broached the subject of taking his widowed mom to Michigan for a week to visit her brothers, I thought it was a decent idea. It would be a good opportunity for him to get to know her better and I could use the occasion to slack off — things wouldn't have to be quite so tidy around here, nor meals so scheduled.

Settling the date took some back-and-forth between all parties involved, but we finally came up with the second week in June. Marty was about to mark this on the calendar when he realized, "We can't do that. It'll be our wedding anniversary."

Today is our 21st anniversary, Marty has been gone for two days and I miss him. I hope he misses me as much.

All the other weeks in June were already eliminated for one reason or another, and July was out of the question; so I urged him to go anyway. "We can always celebrate the anniversary when you come back," I observed. It was only our 21st, not a 50th or a 25th or even a 12-and-a-half which, by the way, we neglected altogether (the Dutch celebrate 12-and-a-half years of marriage — halfway to 25).

So, today is our 21st anniversary, Marty has been gone for two days and I miss him. I hope he misses me as much. It's the first time in 21 years we've been apart on our anniversary. Originally I thought we could ignore this date completely and then celebrate by going out for a romantic candlelight dinner on the arranged Saturday night in two weeks. I didn't even send along a card for him to open. He didn't leave me one either.

At 9 o'clock this morning he phoned. I was out. Now I am longing for him. I love his lopsided smile and when he winks at me. I love the way I can tell him everything. I love praying with him. I love the way our kids remind me of him, each in a different way. And now that he's away, I appreciate the way he tidies up after himself and the rest of us. You should see the family room now that he's away — newspapers everywhere. The kids keep saying things like, "You can tell Dad's not here," and "This place is a mess."

I miss his kisses and having lunch together and topping his coffee with Josie's Famous Fruit Dip.

Finally at 5 p.m. the phone rang again. "Happy anniversary, my love" came the familiar voice. He told me about the uncles and the cousins and the paddleboat and the turtles and I told him about the phone calls, the school newsletter, the kids' soccer games, and opening our pool.

This evening our eldest daughter, Angela, and I went shopping. We bought bathing suits, shorts and shirts, and I bought a dress. Marty might not even recognize me when he comes back.




It wasn't such a bad anniversary after all; and I still have that romantic candlelight dinner to look forward to. Now I think I'll just go tidy the family room before I go to bed.

Marian den Boer lives in a mostly tidy home with her husband, Marty, and six children in Hamilton, Ont.

Classifieds

Classified Rates	Marriages	Anniversaries	Anniversaries
<p>(Revised February 1, 1995)</p> <p>Births \$25.00</p> <p>Marriages & Engagements \$40.00</p> <p>Anniversaries \$45.00</p> <p>2-column anniversaries \$90.00</p> <p>Obituaries \$45.00</p> <p>Notes of thanks \$35.00</p> <p>Birthdays \$40.00</p> <p>All other one-column classified advertisements: \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00.</p> <p>Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge.</p> <p>Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive</p> <p>ATTENTION!</p> <p>a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.</p> <p>b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.</p> <p>c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS</p> <p>We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p>Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	<p></p> <p>TIMMERMAN/VANDERMEULEN: Mr. and Mrs. Henk and Ina Timmerman of Cambridge, Ont., announce the marriage of their daughter</p> <p>SHARON GRACE to KEVIN NEIL son of Harmen and Gerda VanderMeulen.</p> <p>This will take place on Saturday, June 28, 1997, D.V., in Hamilton, Ont.</p> <p>Their address is: 187 David Avenue, Hamilton, ON L9A 3V8</p>	<p>1957 July 5 1997</p> <p>"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain" (Ps. 127:1). With joy and thanksgiving to God for his faithfulness, we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and Opa and Oma</p> <p>PETER and JOAN KAPTEYN (nee ELLENS)</p> <p>We thank you, Mom and Dad, for your wise guidance, generous love and frequent prayers. We cherish the Christian upbringing you gave us and your continued loving presence in our life.</p> <p>Enca & John DeWit Matthew, Andrew, Joel Ray & Anne Kapteyn Anneke, Peter Bill Kapteyn (taken from this life on March 19, 1984)</p> <p>Home address: 63 Ashby, Samia, ON N7S 4L5</p>	<p></p> <p><i>Congratulations to Albert and Marie Seinen on their 50th wedding anniversary!</i></p> <p>De Krim July 18 Houston 1947 1997</p> <p>We are happy to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of</p> <p>ALBERT and MARIE SEINEN (nee LUBBELINKHOF)</p> <p>Their wedding text was, and remains, Exodus 33:14-17: "My presence will go with you and I will give you rest..."</p> <p>We thank God for His faithfulness and for giving our parents so many happy years together. We wish them continued health and many happy hours gardening, fishing, travelling, and visiting with family and friends.</p> <p>Congratulations and much love from us all.</p> <p>Grace & John Hols — Houston, B.C. Lisa, Jeff, Laura Henry & Sylvia Seinen — Houston, B.C. Jonathan, Sarah, Eric, Lucas Ann & Ross Alexander — Bend, Oregon Tim, Stephan Lucy & Stan Spletzer — Houston, B.C. Lynnette, Rhonda, Chris Albert & Susan Seinen — Houston, B.C. Benjamin, Terry, Jolene, Alison Clarence & Bobby Seinen — Houston, B.C. Joshua, Bailey, Clinton</p> <p>Their home address is: Box 24, Houston, BC V0J 1Z0</p>
	<p>Birthdays</p> <p>PROCÉE:</p> <p></p> <p><i>Congratulations to Titus Procée on his 80th birthday!</i></p> <p>Let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord; for it is by His grace that</p> <p>TITUS PROCÉE celebrates his 80th birthday on July 10, 1997.</p> <p>EIGHTY kisses and hugs from your loving family, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Way to go, Heit!</p> <p>Home address: 150 Dunlop St. East, Unit 1002 East, Bayshore Landing, Barrie, ON L4M 6H1</p>	<p>Emmen Guelph 1937 1997</p> <p><i>Praise God from whom all blessings flow.</i></p> <p>Our parents</p> <p>RIENDER and GRACE VANDYK</p> <p>will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on July 19, 1997, D.V.</p> <p>Much love and congratulations from all your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.</p> <p>All friends of the family and relatives are heartily invited to join us for a time of celebration at Riverside Park on Woolwich Street in Guelph, Ont., on July 19, 1997, from 2-4 p.m.</p> <p>Home address: 15 Lowes Rd., Guelph, ON N1G 4X2</p>	
		<p>Job Opportunities</p> <p>Interested in living in Holland, for one year? Job opportunity for mature English speaking nanny to care for 3 children in Wassenaar (near The Hague and beaches) effective Aug. 15. Knowledge of Dutch language not required. Insurance paid, 30 hrs. per week, 500 guilders per month. Questions? Call Ineke Bezuyen at (905) 562-7887.</p>	
		<p>Personal</p> <p>Single male, 28 years old, is seeking a Christian female, between 21-33, for a serious relationship. Children welcome. Must be a committed Christian. Please send picture. Respond to: 36 Coverdale Avenue, Cobourg, ON K9A 4H3</p> <p>Interested in placing an ad? Get in touch with us for details.</p>	
			<p>Vacations</p> <p>GOING TO HOLLAND FOR VACATION? Why not rent a VACATION APARTMENT and visit family and sight-see at your leisure. CENTRALLY LOCATED near APELDOORN. Year-round accommodations. FOR BROCHURE OR MORE INFORMATION CALL Harold or Nellie at (905) 985-7891 or fax us at (905) 985-3007 e-mail: hanel@idirect.com</p>
			<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>My parents are missionaries in Honduras. I am hoping to start classes at Calvin College this September. I am available for summer work in Ontario on June 23. I can work with small power tools after a previous summer in construction. I also have computer skills in most computer programs. In addition, I have my Bronze Medallion in swimming. Please call Jordan Kater collect in Honduras at (504) 37-1485.</p>
<p>Births</p> <p>HARBERS: Clake and Nellie Jonkman, Georgetown, Ont., thank God for the birth of another healthy grandchild on June 16, 1997. Bill and Laura have named her</p> <p>JENNIFER KATRINA</p> <p>She is a welcome sister to Alison and Michael and third grandchild for Bill and Coby Zandbergen, Bnnston, Ont.</p> <p>Home address: R.R. 2, Henderson Rd., Bnnston, ON K0E 1C0</p>			

Classifieds

Obituaries	Church News	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous		
<p>"I have been young, and now am old. Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lends; And his descendants are blessed" (Ps 37:25,26). The Lord took to himself on June 4, 1997.</p> <p>JOHN S. JANSSENS</p> <p>in his 89th year. Beloved husband of the late Fenje Janssens De Jong (1991). Dear father of: John Janssens — Samia, Ont. Jake & Margaret Janssens — Chatham, Ont.</p> <p>Born in Assen, the Neth., John immigrated to Canada in 1948, moving to Samia, where he started a clothing business. He retired in 1969. He was active in the Second Chr. Ref. Church in Samia where he served as an elder for many years. He lived in Chatham for the past five years. He leaves seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren as well as a sister, Roelie Broomhaar of Kingsville and a brother Bertus Janssens of the Netherlands. He was predeceased by his parents, six brothers, one sister, as well as one grandson.</p> <p>The funeral was held on June 7, 1997, at the Second Chr. Ref. Church in Samia, Rev. Peter Nicolai and Rev. John Jongsma officiating.</p> <p>Correspondence address: 112 Parkwood Dr., Chatham, ON N7M 2B2</p>	<p>Christian Reformed Church</p> <p>Classis meetings:</p> <p>— Classis Huron will meet, D.V., in regular session on Sept. 10, 1997, at 9:30 a.m., in the Vanastra CRC, located on Toronto Blvd. in Vanastra. All materials for the printed agenda must be in the office of the stated clerk not later than 12 noon, Aug. 5, 1997. Hilbert Rumph, Stated Clerk.</p> <p>— Classis Chatham of the CRC will meet in regular session, D.V., on Tuesday, Sept. 16, 1997, in the Strathroy-East CRC. All materials for the agenda must be in the office of the stated clerk by Monday, Aug. 4, 1997. Jan H G. Vandergeest, Stated Clerk.</p> <p>— Classis Niagara will hold its next meeting, D.V., on Wednesday, Sept. 17, 1997, at 9 a.m. in the Bethany CRC, Fenwick, Ont. Materials for the agenda, including requests to address Classis, should be forwarded to the stated clerk before Aug. 1, 1997. John TeBrake, Stated Clerk, P.O. Box 985, Fonthill, ON L0S 1E0; or e-mail: john.tebrake@sympatico.ca</p>	<p>DCA Travel  Holland Travel Professionals</p> <p>Toronto 416-224-5211 Toll-Free (Canada wide) 1-800-667-2525 Fax 416-224-0842 Grimsby 905-945-3301 Burlington 905-522-8602 <i>Emergency Service Available</i> Business & Vacation Travel</p>	<p>A Cook Required</p> <p>The dietary department of Holland Christian Homes Inc. has an opening for a cook (approx. 7 shifts in 2 weeks). Duties include large quantity cooking (as per standardized recipes) and preparation of menu items for modified and special diets. Qualifications are post secondary education in a hospitality program or apprenticeship.</p> <p>Send resume to: R. Veldhorst, Dietary Manager Holland Christian Homes Inc., 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7</p>		
<p>Teachers</p> <p>ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE, Alta.: Rocky Christian ECS requires a part-time Special Needs Aide. The applicant should have knowledge and experience with working with young children, and knowledge and experience in speech therapy. For more information regarding this position please call (403) 845-7647. Please send resume, including Personal Testimony and Philosophy of Christian Education to:</p> <p>Rocky Christian ECS 5204-54 Avenue Rocky Mountain House, AB T0M 1T3</p>	<p></p> <p>Voortman</p> <p><i>Over 40 Varieties of Fine Cookies</i></p>	<p>Does Truth Really Matter?</p> <p>Ligonier Ministries of Canada Presents the 1997 Toronto Conference with Dr. R.C. Sproul Rev. R.C. Sproul Jr. & Dr. Jonathan Gerstner August 8 (evening) & 9 (day), 1997</p> <p>The Peoples Church 374 Sheppard Avenue East, North York Please call 1-800-563-3529 or Fax 1-519-837-2883 Listen to R.C. on CHAM 820 AM (Hamilton) 10:15-10:45 PM starting July 1, 1997</p>	<p>Propagation Manager Position</p> <p>Wholesale nursery, growing ground covers, vines, perennials, evergreens, flowering shrubs, and ornamental trees, is accepting applications for the position of Propagation Manager. This position requires experience, organizational skills, and dedication. The propagation techniques used are grafting, seed germination, hardwood and softwood cuttings. Candidates must have excellent communication and people skills, be a team player and a leader. Position is full-time. Wages and benefit package commensurate with qualifications. A training period may be available. Please send resumes in confidence with salary history to:</p> <p>John Langendoen Willowbrook Nurseries Inc., 1000 Balfour St. Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0</p>		
<p>Miscellaneous</p>		<p>Rates to June 30, 1997</p> <table> <tr> <td>RRSP Appr. 4.3%</td> <td>Regular Fund 3.75%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.</p> <p> CRC EXTENSION FUND</p> <p>Call: (416) 461-1207 evenings or write: Christian Reformed Extension Fund 45 Harriet St., Toronto, ON M4L 2G1</p>	RRSP Appr. 4.3%	Regular Fund 3.75%	<p>Look for Peter and Marja on page 14...</p>
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Events

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

July 1-13 The Voice of Liberty Choir, Nijkerk, the Neth., concert tour "Thank You, Canadians!" **July 1:** Joint concert with Liberation Choir, Gordon Alcott Arena, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.; **July 3:** Maranatha CRC, Bowmanville, 8 p.m.; **July 5:** St. George's Cathedral, Kingston, 7:30 p.m.; **July 8:** St. Andrew's Presb. Church, Ottawa, 8 p.m.; **July 10:** Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton, 7:30 p.m.; **July 12:** Community CRC, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m.; **July 13:** Melrose United Church, Hamilton, 8 p.m.

July 1 Frisian picnic, 11 a.m., Pinehurst Conservation Park, Paris, Ont. (On Hwy. 24A, 4 miles north of Paris). (#)

July 12 "Wieringermeer Picnic," 10 a.m., Upper Queen's Park Picnic Grounds, Stratford, Ont. Info.: (519) 822-9918.

July 13 Dutch worship service led by Rev. H.A. Vander Windt, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.

July 13 Dutch worship service led by Rev. J.D. Hellinga, 3 p.m., CRC, Aylmer, Ont. Info.: (519) 773-3025.

July 14-19 Summerfest at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich. For complete details phone Calvin at (616) 957-6142 (#).

July 14-Aug. 1 Summer school at Wycliffe College and the ICS, Toronto, Ont. For brochure and registration details contact Chris Barrigar at (416) 979-2870, fax (416) 979-5668 or e-mail: c.barrigar@utoronto.ca. (#)

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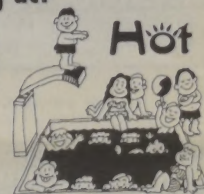
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Letters

Conference reflected respect for the authority of Scripture

Thanks very much for your excellent and extensive coverage of our recent conference on the theme "Trust and Suspicion: Hermeneutics in a Broken World."

I was delighted to hear that the conference challenged you and prompted you to reflect on important questions regarding your own interpretation of the Bible. I'm glad we could provide this service!

A couple of references in your report and your editorial give me the impression that you thought the conference advocated a "hermeneutics of

suspicion" as an alternative to a "hermeneutics of trust."

You state in your article, for example, that ICS "challenged the Christian community to cast an eye of suspicion on the way people interpret the Bible." Your editorial implies that the issues you confronted come down to a choice between "trust" and "suspicion."

A stance of trust

Perhaps our theme contributed to the impression that the conference offered a choice between two alternatives. But note that the theme was "Trust

and Suspicion," not "Trust or Suspicion." It was decidedly not our intention to advocate suspicion in the face of trust.

The conference brochure clearly indicated our desire "to generate vision and hope for readings which reflect respect for the authority of Scripture and which speak in a healing way to a broken world." As your report on James Olthuis' lecture confirms, the presentations made by ICS personnel clearly reflected an effort to address contemporary issues from a stance of trust.

This matter is directly

relevant to the question, raised in your editorial, whether the Institute should take responsibility for the views of speakers such as Walter Brueggemann. I'm sure you agree that ICS, building on a tradition of scholarship in the Reformed tradition, must engage in dialogue with leading scholars in various fields. To do otherwise is to ignore our mandate.

Underneath is trust

Both Brueggemann and Phyllis Trible are very reputable scholars who raise important, current questions while taking the Bible very seriously. They were excellent dialogue partners for the purposes of our conference. As a Christian graduate school we need to trust and take responsibility for the dialogue. But this does not mean that we

are "responsible for" all the views of our partners.

Bep Koole's comment on the conference, quoted in your article, gets at the heart of the matter: "We might have suspicion about some things, but underneath there is trust." This, it seems to me, provides the answer to the worries you expressed in your editorial about the antithesis. We Christians can genuinely listen to, engage and challenge the "suspicious" of contemporary (call it "post-modern") culture if "underneath there is trust" in the God of the Scriptures.

Thanks again for your thorough and engaging reports.

Harry Fernhout
President ICS
Toronto, Ont.

Students apply Bible study to own lives

Regarding Mr. Syrt Wolters' response to Bulkley Valley Christian High School Grade 10 student writings:

I find it disappointing to hear about his disappointment. The context was a study of the books of Luke and Acts. The social context was a class of 26 Grade 10 students representing seven different congregations, some of which have experienced church disputes and splits.

I think it is quite obvious that the students applied Acts 2 to their own life situations (espe-

cially unity), which are very humanly real, certainly not "etherial." The students do not find the work of the Holy Spirit "vague, hard to describe." They discuss the work of the Holy Spirit in terms of movies, clothes, communication, vocation, selfishness, civility.

I ask whether Mr. Wolters carefully read the students' responses. It is quite easy to criticize on the basis of what is not said. I would suggest that Mr. Wolters' real disappointment is that the students did not say

what he would have said, in the way he wished it said. I hope he will reread the student excerpts and see how much correspondence there is between their thoughts and his.

One example: Mr. Wolters speaks about Peter's boldness on Pentecost Sunday: "Then he was scared stiff; now he is bold." Compare this to Tamara's statement: "But God's Spirit makes it possible for wimps to be brave."

Curt Gesch and class
Smithers, B.C.

Marian devotion is idolatry

I would like to comment on the article regarding Marian devotion in the May 16 issue of CC. As a former Roman Catholic converted to the Reformed faith, I understand Bishop Roussin's explanation of Marian devotion to be very misleading.

First, the official Roman Catholic position on this subject has always been that Mary is to be honored and venerated but not worshiped. Therefore there is nothing new about Vatican II.

The core of the problem is simply that the honor and veneration given to Mary always functions as worship. It is clearly obvious that it did in the past and that it still does today.

Marian devotion ultimately points back to Mary and does not lead to Jesus. An example of this is the Marian cultists who pray all 15 decades of the rosary each day and collect all kinds of scapulars, medals and statues but rarely open their Bibles.

It is not through devotion to

Mary that we grow in Christ but by the Holy Spirit and the Word.

Marian teaching upheld

As far as the reforms of Vatican II are concerned, if one takes time to read the documents of this Vatican, it is obvious that the teaching on Mary has not really changed. Vatican II still encourages such devotions as scapulars and rosaries and it affirms such titles as co-redemptrix and mediatrix. Furthermore, it does not reject

the false Marian doctrines like the Assumption and her sinlessness from conception. Rather, it considers this whole body of teaching as irreformable.

All this flies in the face of the Reformation and the biblical view of prayer — that it be offered only to the true God and that there is only one mediator, Jesus Christ.

To go beyond this is to fall into idolatry.

Frans Connors
Newmarket, Ont.



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Charity begins at home

I am scratching my head and cannot believe what I read and hear. It seems that every time someone says something they are talking about sending a group of young people to do some mission work or soup kitchen work, and it is got to be in the U.S.

Has everybody forgotten that with government cut backs in this country, soup kitchens are closing everywhere. I am sure we can find a place for young people to do mission work in this country — in Toronto, Montreal or maybe Winnipeg and regions that are hit with forest fires or other disasters? Every dollar that is spent in Canada is a Canadian dollar and not \$0.72.

It is one thing to help in another country but why pick one which is wealthier than ours? Shouldn't we look at our own backyard?

Jake DeGraaf
Montreal

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News

Increased funding a possibility for Christian schools in Alberta

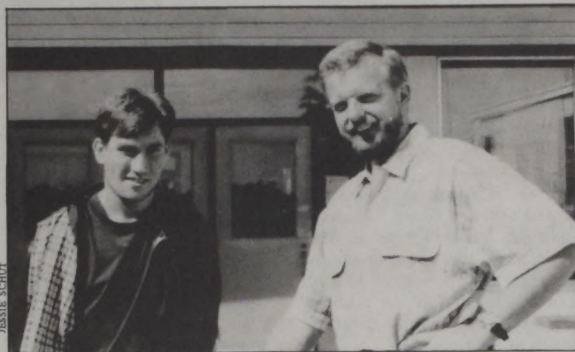
Jessie Schut

EDMONTON — Christian school supporters in Alberta will be spending the next ten months in prayer and action, as a special task force of the Alberta Legislature studies the issue of funding for independent schools.

Supporters were given some hope recently that funding for the schools would be increased when Tory Carol Haley, MLA for Olds-Didsbury, introduced a private member's bill into the Legislature.

Bill 209 proposed that funding for independent schools would go from the current \$1,815 per pupil per year to \$2,700. That would mean funding would increase from 50 per cent of the per pupil basic instructional grant that public schools receive, to 75 per cent of the grant, an increase of \$14 million dollars in the province's education budget.

The bill has been controversial both inside and outside the house. Cabinet members are split on the issue, with Education minister Gary Mar and Premier Ralph Klein saying they'd vote against it, while Treasurer Stockwell Day and other Tories have supported in-



Peter Buisman (left) principal of Edmonton Christian High School, and David Cameron, a Grade 12 student at the school.

creased funding. Day, a former Christian school principal, has said publicly that the bill for increased funding is long overdue.

Ordinary people make sacrifices

Meanwhile, newspapers such as the *Edmonton Journal* and *Edmonton Sun* have given the issue wider coverage than most private member's bills receive. The *Journal* even gave guest editorial space to Don Langkamp, treasurer of Parkland Emmanuel Christian School.

He wrote that, as treasurer, he

sees the sacrifices that most parents make to send their children to an independent school. Most of these parents, he said, are very ordinary people who don't live up to the image that the general public has of them, an image of high-class rich folks who think their kids are too good for public schools.

Gary Duthler, executive director of the Association for Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta, says that the action generated by the introduction of this bill has been phenomenal. Letters and phone calls have

been streaming into MLAs' offices urging them to support the passage of Bill 209. It's caught the Alberta Teacher's Association by surprise, as well as the Public School Association.

"Bill 209 would have been voted down if it weren't for the persistence of independent school supporters," says Duthler.

Welcome delay

After Mar announced the development of the task force, a vote in favor of delaying the bill until the task force's work is complete was passed. This means the bill will die on the order paper for this session, but that's actually good news for independent school supporters.

"If the bill had become law, the 75 per cent level of funding would have been cast in stone," says Peter Buisman, principal of Edmonton Christian High School. "Once it's entrenched in a bill, it's hard to change. We'd rather have the funding dealt with as a budget item."

Duthler is jubilant about Mar's decision to create a task force. "It's the best thing that could have happened," he says, adding that it means a better bill might be introduced next year, one that gives 100 per cent funding to independent schools.

"We now have a 10-month period where everybody on both sides of the issue can stop lobbying and start gathering information and evidence to present to a task force in a factual manner," he told an *Edmonton Journal* reporter. "We're going to have to show that the things we've been saying about ourselves, all the claims, are true and that we are entitled to that type of funding."

Duthler has some advice for Christian school supporters, now that the issue will be in the limelight for the next number of months. Christian school supporters need to get involved in dialogue with their neighbors and friends, showing them that Christian schools are not exclusive and intolerant, the two most common labels being used by foes of the funding.

He suggests inviting MLAs to the schools to check out the facts. And he also urges Christians to use the strongest weapon in their arsenal. "We need to do what we do best: pray," says Duthler.

Teachers and board sign (sigh) collectively

CC staff

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — After almost three years of difficult but careful negotiations, the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) and the Association for Christian Education of St. Catharines have reached an agreement concerning the organization of teachers and support staff at Calvin Memorial and Beacon High by CLAC.

Some of the crucial points of disagreement surrounded the issue of collective bargaining by teachers, going under the Labour Relations Act and establishing binding arbitration as a way to break a deadlock. In the end both parties compromised.

The CLAC abandoned its bargaining rights for the teachers and support staff so that the teachers and support staff could withdraw from the Labour Relations Act/Labour Board framework; and the school has agreed to recognize an Association of Christian Teachers and Support Staff (ACTSS) that will speak for the members on contract

matters.

It is understood that CLAC personnel will advise and negotiate on behalf of this local professional association.

The compromise addresses the concern of the school board that any involvement by the Ontario Labour Board would endanger the confessional integrity and independence of the Association for Christian Education and its authority structure. It also recognizes and provides for the desire of the teachers to act collectively on matters of salary and conditions of employment.

Key features

Some of the central elements of the collective agreement are:

- a three-year collective agreement between the staffs and the school board via this new association;
- matters of confessional purpose, duties and Christian morality are clearly set out;
- clear provisions for co-operation and consultation between teachers and board;

- no strikes, lockouts or job actions at any time;

- voluntary binding arbitration on financial matters only, after a "fact finding" process and approval by both the school association and the teachers;

- salaries and benefits for the next school year to be negotiated each year between the board and the teachers via this new professional association;

- arbitration procedures to deal with any problems that remain after normal discussion, consultation and decision making.

A year ago, contract talks between the CLAC and the board of John Knox Christian School in Brampton, Ont., broke down and resulted in a withdrawal by the CLAC. No other Christian school staffs in Ontario (or elsewhere) have approached the CLAC to act on their behalf. These staffs rely on the Ontario Christian School Teachers Association for guidance as they pursue informal talks with their boards which generally lead to individual contracts.

News Digest

Carries his cross, literally

TULSA, Okla. (EP) — Jesus told his followers to take up a cross and follow him. Keith Wheeler takes that command literally. In 1985, he became convinced God wanted him to build a cross and carry it around as a witness to the world of God's love.

Since then, Wheeler has carried the 90-pound, 12-by-six-foot wooden cross to more than 70 countries. In a typical day, he travels 20 to 30 miles. In total, Wheeler has logged more than 10,000 miles on six continents and has been in 10 war zones. Along the way, he has been beaten, jailed and nearly killed. According to Wheeler, the purpose of his ministry is to promote reconciliation.

Politically correct guide to Bible

TORONTO (AP) — First there were politically-correct fairy tales, and now there's *The Politically Correct Guide to the Bible*. In the book, author Edward Moser rewrites biblical stories to spoof the modern mindset that has difficulty with concepts of divine truth and universal standards for behavior.

The guide features The Ten Recommendations (instead of The Ten Commandments), including the advice not to bear false witness "unless you can afford a Dream Team of morally disengaged attorneys" and to "remember the Sabbath Day, so thou can't get all thy shopping done."

Song marches into hymn book

VANCOUVER, B.C. — The onslaught of "Onward! Christian Soldiers" couldn't be held back, and the hymn has marched onto the pages of the new Anglican hymn book. The church's Council of General Synod approved the publication of the new hymn book, but not before members argued for the inclusion of "Onward! Christian Soldiers." Written in 1864, the hymn is a long-time favorite of some but is disliked by others because of its militaristic imagery.

Council member Lorna Janze says "what we're talking about is the war against Satan."